



# JEFFERSON COUNTY PARKS DEPARTMENT ANNUAL REPORT September, 2022



**Mission Statement:**

*To preserve natural resources for public use and conservation, to operate and maintain a parks system with resource-oriented recreation, trails and specialty parks; and to expand the parks system for environmental and land use benefits, and the health and enjoyment of Jefferson County residents.*

## **PARKS**

The Jefferson County Parks Department currently manages year round operations for 22 County Parks. The parks vary in size from small wayside rest areas like Cold Spring Creamery Historic Site to the 517 acre Dorothy Carnes County Park and Rose Lake State Natural Area. Recreational features in our parks range from interpretation of historic sites, to boat launches, shelters, playgrounds, extensive trails, and expansive natural areas. Some of our recreational offerings include an off leash dog exercise area, groomed cross country skiing, snowshoeing, sledding, hiking, running, biking, boating, fishing, hosting special events, shelter rentals and picnicking, nature appreciation, playgrounds, mountain biking, Frisbee golf, photography and more.

### **Project highlights in our park system from the past year include:**

- On-going forest restoration at Garman Nature Preserve (100% donations)
- Develop and install Interpretive signs at Indian Mounds County Park (Donations)
- Replace and update automatic gate operators at Korth County Park
- Woodland restoration and invasive plant control at Crawfish River County Park
- Site Improvements added at Rock River landing in Jefferson
- Inoculated over 50 ash trees in Parks and County Facilities against EAB
- Worked with volunteers on mountain bike trails at Upper Rock Lake Park (Volunteers)
- Began work on creating a Friends of Jefferson County Parks group to help with fundraising and project work
- Rehabilitation of Carnes South wildlife viewing blind (Volunteers)
- Replacing surface material at 5 playgrounds
- Added fee structures to Rock River Park and Cappies Landing boat launches

Shelter Rentals continue to be a staple of summer activities in our parks. Korth County Park in Lake Mills continues to be the most popular shelter in the park system due to the views and amenities. The Jefferson County Dog Park is our most heavily used facility with dog ownership in the State at an all-time high. 2022 annual tags are on course to a new record with 1,872 (9.7.21) sold to date.

## **TRAILS**

Staff also manage a comprehensive network of trails including the 30-mile Glacial River Bike Trail, 2-mile Glacial River Mountain Bike Trails, 11-mile Interurban Bike Trail, Jefferson County Intercommunity Bike Routes, 224 miles of Jefferson County Snowmobile trails, 18 miles of hiking and cross-country ski trails with-in our parks, and our Glacial Heritage Area Water Trails. These trail systems have grown to become some of our most popular offerings with silent sports like paddling and biking continuing to lead the outdoor recreation industry for popularity and numbers of days spent participating. The link between personal health and access to the outdoors continues to be an emphasis in our communities highlighted by year over year increases in users.

The 2021/2022 winter season was well below average for snowmobiling, but the snow provided enough staying power for over 3-weeks of groomed cross-country skiing at Carnes and Korth Parks.

### **Project Highlights on our Trail Systems include:**

- Completion of Phase I of the Jefferson Interurban Trail - 2.5 Miles
- Completion of Phase II of the Jefferson Interurban Trail - 4.5 Miles (October 1<sup>st</sup> 2022)
- Feasibility Study on Phase III was completed and engineering has begun
- Jefferson County Snowmobile trails were expanded by 24 miles

- Successful applications for snowmobile trail bridge replacements on two newly funded trails
- Volunteers continuing to build trails at Upper Rock Lake Park in Lake Mills
- Volunteers continue to maintain the Glacial River Trail Mountain Bike Trails in Jefferson
- Successful grant application through WiDNR for the Interurban Trail Phase III for \$249,999.00
- Applications for additional grants through WisDOT's Carbon Reduction Program for the Interurban Trail Phase III

## **COUNTY FACILITY: GROUNDS MAINTENANCE**

We manage the grounds of all county owned properties. This includes general mowing and landscape maintenance at the Courthouse, MIS building, Highway Department, Fairgrounds, Human Services, Workforce Development/University of Wisconsin-Extension, Sheriff's Department annex and shooting range, and the Potters Field Cemetery. We also work with and support the facility managers in their annual parking lot snow and ice removal operations.

## **FLOOD MITIGATION AND TAX FORECLOSURES**

The Parks Department also manages the county's 140 flood mitigation properties and assists the Corporation Counsels office in grounds keeping and managing issues on tax foreclosures. The department provides services including compliance monitoring, reporting, enforcement of violations, response to complaints and non-compliant uses, invasive plant removals, building demolition, mowing, and mitigation of hazards. A planning process is ongoing to create a management plan for the properties, identify those properties best suited for recreation or public access, and possibly create a system to lease or rent properties to neighbors or other interested parties.

### **Noteworthy Donations:**

- \$38,000.00 disbursement from the Community Foundation of the Fox Valley for Garman Nature Preserve
- \$16,161.50 in donations from three Brew with a View fundraising events at Korth Park with Tyrana Brewery
- \$2,500.00 from Friends of Rose Lake for Invasive Plant Control and 2023 spring Rx burn
- \$2,000 Donation from the Jefferson Community Foundation for Vegetation Restoration at Crawfish River Park
- 11,466.00 donation for Carnes Park Building Improvements – Jeff Mason Memorial Fund
- Two Memorial Benches Donated and Placed in the Parks and on the Bike Trail
- \$1,200.00 Mary Linton Memorial Donations
- 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Dog Park Calendar sold 675 copies for a total of \$6,750.00 in Dog Park Revenue

### **Current Departmental Successes**

- Successful fundraising and special events hosted with our highly valued partners and friends groups.
- Alternative sources of income for capital projects through private donations and foundations continue to come in.
- High level of support from the community.
- Successful grant writing efforts on larger projects (RTP, TAP, Stewardship, SFR, CC Aids).
- Continued support from individual volunteers, volunteer groups, and friends' groups.
- Creative funding and partnerships to keep Master Plans and large projects moving forward.
- Gold Star standard designation from Wisconsin Healthy Communities.

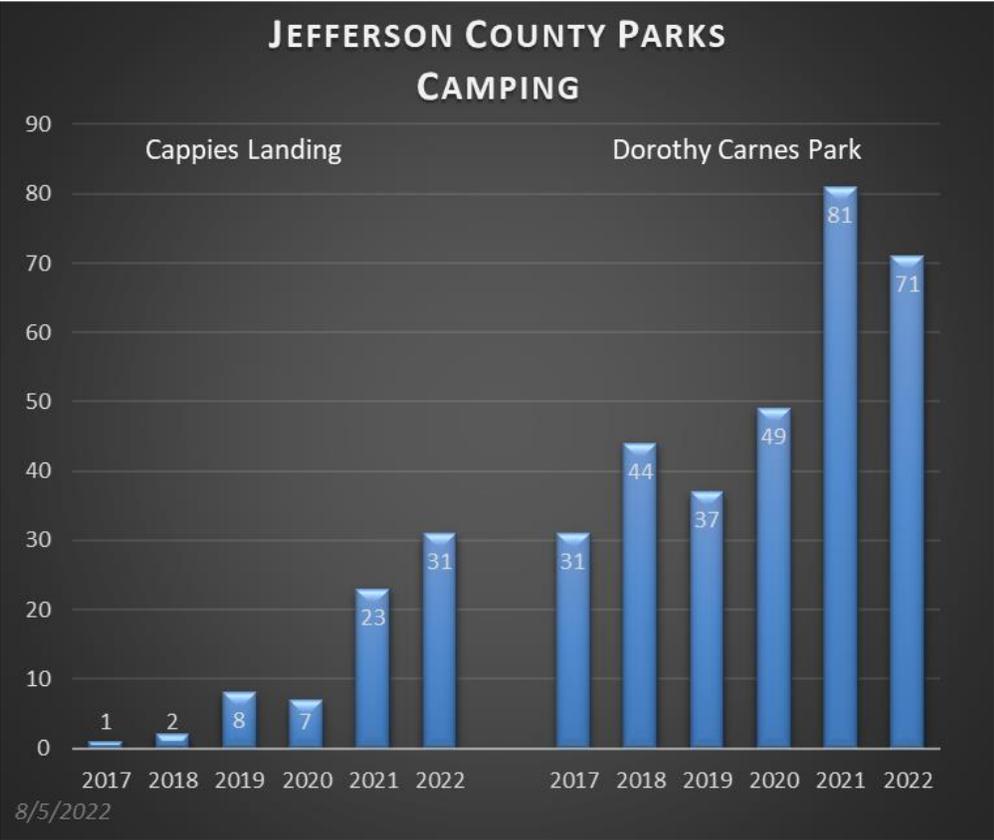
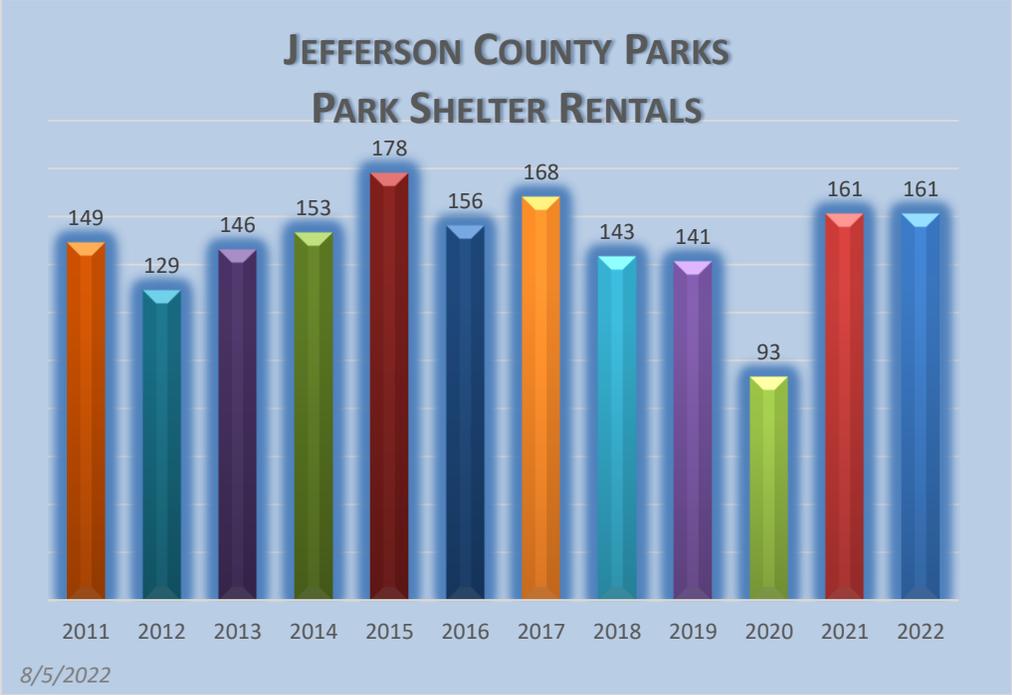
### Current Departmental Opportunities

- Implementation of the updated Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan.
- Implementation of the 2021 Jefferson County Comprehensive and Land Use Plan
- Expansion of marketing efforts to include a social media platform.
- Redevelopment of webpage resources and streamlining of scheduling and payment systems
- Expansion of digital and web-based platforms for recreational assets and trails.
- Expansion of on-line and GIS based tools for inventory and asset management.
- Partnerships with State and local municipalities and organizations to build our regional recreational assets and working capacity.
- Fostering new friends groups to help with long term maintenance and fundraising goals.
- Build upon our Natural Resources Foundation fund and look into other funding options such as donor advised funds.
- Development of Implementation Plan to include recreational and joint/management opportunities at the Holzhueter State Park in partnership with WiDNR.

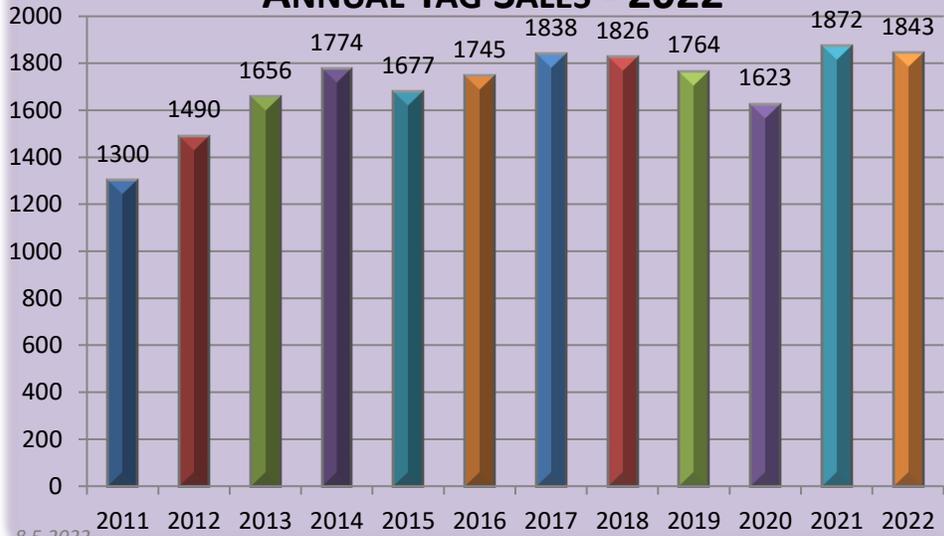
### Current Departmental Challenges

- Funding and fundraising for larger capital projects such as the Interurban Trail project
- Staffing levels sufficient to meet the objectives of park plans and expectations of the public
- Recruitment and retention of staff
- Management and recruitment of volunteers
- Enforcement of county ordinances in parks – Lack of Parks Ranger Services
- Community outreach, advocacy, and fundraising (Public Relations)
- Reaching and engaging our community members in planning and information sessions
- Continually expanding scope of responsibility for the department

Jefferson County Parks	Total Park Acreage
Altpeter Park	4
Blackhawk Island Fishing Wharf	1
Burnt Village Landing	1.5
Cappie's Landing	6.2
Carlin Weld County Park	78.5
Crawfish River County Park	17.5
Cold Spring Creamery Historic Site	0.8
Holzhueter State Park	145
Jefferson County Dog Park	109
Dorothy Carnes County Park	517
Garman Nature Preserve	45
Glacial River Mountain Bike Trails	24
Highway 16 Wayside Park	4
Indian Mounds	7.1
Joy Park	0.8
Kanow	45
Korth Park	89
Pohlmann Park	9.2
Rock Lake Park (upper and lower)	23
Rock River Park	4.3
Rome Pond	12
Welcome Travelers	8
	<b>1006.9</b>

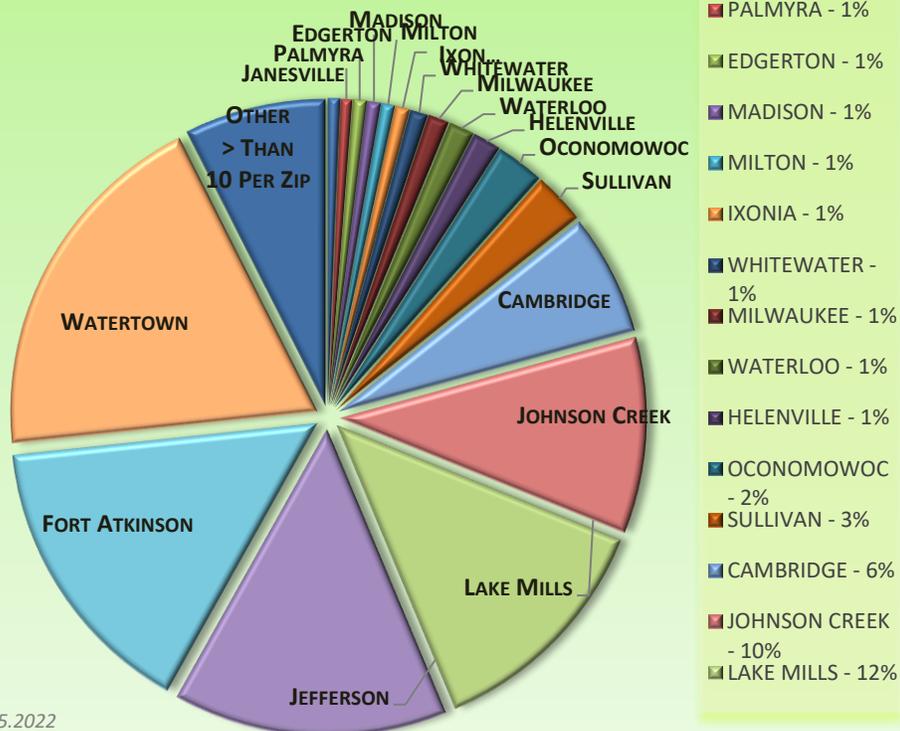


## JEFFERSON COUNTY DOG PARK ANNUAL TAG SALES - 2022



8.5.2022

### 2022 ANNUAL



8.5.2022